

micelin moment

FAMED NY CHEF ERIC RIPERT IS BEST SERVED IN VACHERON CONSTANTIN STYLE. BY ROBERTA NAAS

In recent months New Yorkers have witnessed a few impressive openings: Le Bernardin, where famed chef Eric Ripert curates an exquisite menu, reopened with much fanfare and a spectacularly updated décor. Gotham also became home to the first Vacheron Constantin luxury watch boutique in the US—a true status symbol, as this is the oldest continually operating watch brand in the world. To celebrate its boutique opening, the brand created several New York boutique watch exclusives, one of which has become a favorite of Ripert. His timepiece of choice is the American 1921 Boutique New York.

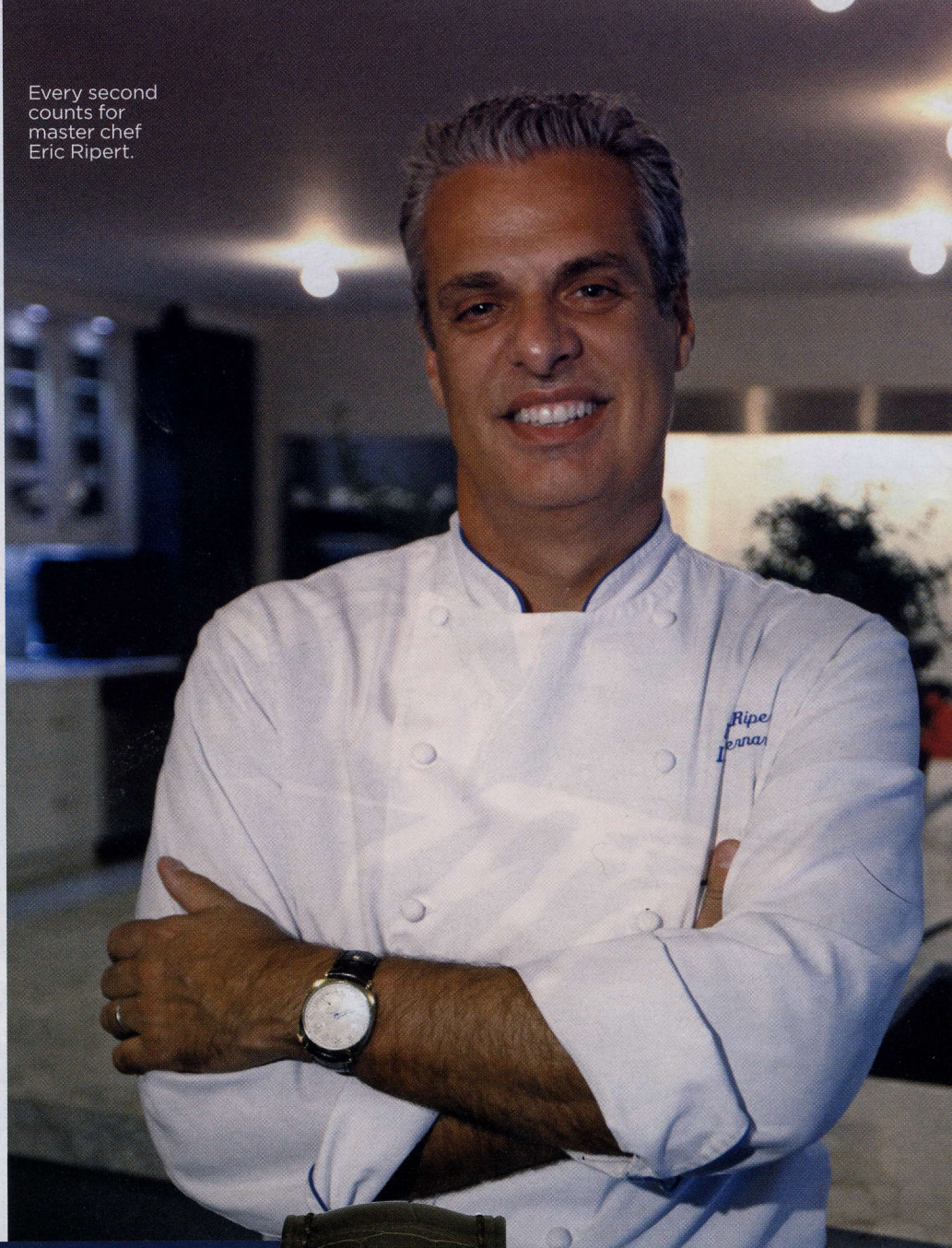
“Time is everything in my business,” says Ripert. “With cooking and pastry, a few seconds too much or too little can ruin a dish. Cooking involves precision, and precision means time.”

Time has played an important role in Ripert’s success as a chef. He admits that he was in the “right place at the right time” when he joined Le Bernardin, being neither too old nor too young to take on the chef position, which has since become a partnership and led to other opportunities.

“When I first walked into Le Bernardin as an employee, I remember looking at my watch. I knew it was a special moment, a turning point in my life. It was exactly 7:40 AM on June 11, 1991. I will remember that forever. When I received my American 21 as a gift from my partner at Le Bernardin, Maguy Le Coze, together with Vacheron Constantin, she conspired to have this exact time and date inscribed on the watch case. It was an incredible, touching gesture.”

During his early days as a cook, Ripert says, seconds made a huge difference in his work. Today, as an executive chef, author, and television personality, his time is measured

Every second counts for master chef Eric Ripert.



WATCH DETAILS

Eric Ripert’s Favorite Watch: Vacheron Constantin Historiques American 1921 Boutique New York (\$33,700), created as an exclusive to celebrate the opening of Vacheron Constantin’s first North American boutique. Available only at the boutique, the watch pays homage to the brand’s heritage, its long US relationships, and the roaring ‘20s. Just 64 pieces have been made. It is crafted in 18k gold with the hand-wound mechanical Caliber 4400 developed in-house by Vacheron Constantin. 729 Madison Ave., 212-317-8964



mostly in minutes and hours—and he has fallen in love with watches.

“My first watch was a Cartier Santos. Today I have about a dozen watches in my collection, many of them, are made by Vacheron Constantin. It’s hard for me to pick one favorite. I have a watch for the moment, and today it’s definitely the Vacheron Constantin American 21. I love the design and how it feels on my wrist. I also love the fact that I own number seven of 64 watches created.”

Another passion of Ripert’s is City Harvest, the food rescue organization that distributes unused fresh food such as vegetables, fruit, bread, fish, and pastries from local restaurants to nearly 600 community food programs. “Le Bernardin is a luxurious restaurant, and very simply, it was hard for me to reconcile the food I was cooking with my neighbors going hungry. I wanted to find a way to give back.” **G**